

February 4, 2008

Senator Joseph Lieberman  
Chairman, Subcommittee on  
Private Sector Global Warming  
Senate Hart 706  
Washington, DC 20010

Senator John Warner  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on  
Private Sector Global Warming  
Senate Russell 225  
Washington, DC 20010

Dear Chairman Lieberman and Ranking Member Warner:

As a broad and diverse group of domestic forestry interests, we appreciate your efforts to tackle global climate change through the development of carbon offset markets within climate legislation. As you know, forests play a critical and often undervalued role in the climate equation. In the United States alone forests offset eight percent of U.S. emissions each year through the uptake of carbon dioxide and storage of carbon in forests and forest products. Today we ask for your help in maintaining the environmental benefits provided by our forests, and ensuring that the national climate policy framework you are building works to keep American forests forested.

Forests cover one third of the land area in the United States providing clean water and air, wildlife habitat, forest products and other social and ecological values for Americans. More than half of the nation's forestland—roughly 400 million acres—is held in private hands, three-quarters of which is owned in millions of small tracts by families and individuals. Without the appropriate recognition of these forests in federal climate legislation, we stand to lose them to other competing uses.

Appropriately recognizing sustainable forest management in a carbon offset market creates powerful incentives to help ensure that forests, and the long-lived products that come from them, continue to sequester atmospheric carbon over the long term. According to the EPA, managed forests in the U.S. currently remove the greenhouse gasses emitted by 108 million cars annually. We are concerned that current legislation, if adopted, would leave the vast majority of managed forests ineligible to participate in carbon markets. Considering the recent market downturn for most forest products and the ongoing pressure to convert forestland to other uses, such an outcome could have devastating consequences for forestland owners and our national climate change policy alike.

Before full Senate consideration of climate legislation this year, we would like to work with you to address these important priorities. We have worked closely with forest carbon experts to identify both the benefits and the mechanics of including managed forests in climate change policy, and are also working collaboratively with conservation and other organizations on these principles. We would like to share this

information with you. Your leadership to promote the contributions of managed forests will provide an unprecedented opportunity to achieve carbon sequestration goals that benefit the nation. While current proposals are a positive step, they can be strengthened to deliver far greater value to the American public at this critical juncture. We are confident that, working together, we can develop a policy that will both reduce atmospheric carbon, and maintain our sustainably managed forests and the many benefits they provide our country, for future generations.

Sincerely,

Society of American Foresters

National Association of State Foresters

American Forest Foundation

National Association of Conservation Districts

Pulp & Paperworkers' Resource Council

American Loggers Council

Hardwood Federation

Association of Consulting Foresters

Forecon, Inc.

American Forest Resource Council

California Forestry Association

American Forest & Paper Association